

Concepts
Practical Tools for Parks and Recreation

**California
Leaders' Opinions
of Parks and Recreation**

**2002
Second Edition**



**California Department of Parks and Recreation
Planning Division**

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Printed in Sacramento, California**

**This publication is an element of the California Outdoor Recreation Planning
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Summary of Findings

Park professionals value the benefits that parklands, recreation facilities and programs provide to the individual, the public and the community as a whole. But are these views understood and shared by others? Are they shared by the decision-makers who can provide or withhold political and budgetary support for park and recreation agencies? Knowing the attitudes and opinions of important public officials allows park professionals to focus their promotional efforts to more effectively convey the importance and value of parks and recreation.

As part of its technical assistance efforts, the Planning Division of California State Parks surveyed California legislators, mayors, county executives and the chairs of county boards of supervisors in early 2002. The survey assessed leaders' opinions and attitudes about the personal, social and economic benefits of parks and recreation facilities and programs in each respondent's jurisdiction.

In general, the survey showed that all leaders shared very positive opinions about the role that park and recreation lands, facilities and programs play in creating and maintaining the quality of life for individuals and communities in California.

COMPARATIVE RESULTS

- Mayors, legislators, county supervisors and county executives all agreed that residents most value parks and recreation programs because they provide safe, wholesome, fun programs and park facilities for family activities.
- All leaders felt residents placed less value on the concept that parks create jobs and generate income for local businesses. State legislators gave the highest scores among the leader groups to the statement that recreation areas and facilities create jobs and help the economy.
- Leaders strongly agreed that recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in their communities.
- Legislators appeared to more strongly agree with positive statements about parks and recreation, scoring each positive statement higher than other leader groups in almost every case and scoring the two negative statements lower than the other groups.
- All leaders felt that there were not enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use. Of all the groups of leaders, county supervisors, with strong representation in Central and Northern California, were the least satisfied with the availability of recreation areas and facilities.

- All leaders disagreed with the concept that recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.

Survey responses show that up to 20 million of California's 34 million residents live in cities represented in the Mayors' survey. Sixty percent of the legislator's survey responses came from the six most highly urbanized counties of Southern California. By contrast, 89% of the responses from the county boards of supervisors came from central and northern California counties, while responses from county executives were broadly distributed throughout the state.

Highlights from Each Survey

STATE LEGISLATORS

- While legislators felt residents placed only a medium value on the concept that parks create jobs and generate income for local businesses, they strongly agreed that recreation areas increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property. Legislators also indicated that improving the economy would be one of their top priorities over the next five years. This suggests that promoting parks' positive effect on the economy could be more effectively presented in terms of increased property values rather than through increased jobs or business income.
- While framing budgetary requests and legislation for parks and recreation it would also be wise to note the legislators' general opinion that recreation areas reduce crime and juvenile delinquency. And that they perceive that residents place the highest value on safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities.

MAYORS

- Mayors' perception of residents' value of parks and recreation rated medium to high for all of the statements except for the one regarding creating jobs and generating income for local businesses. Very close to the top were high ratings for the opportunity for team sports and youth activities, the opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development, facilities and programs for special populations and the opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth-at-risk.
- Mayors were less satisfied, although just below a medium level, with traffic, noise, clean air/water and similar environmental conditions. Depending on the park location and facilities, there may be a case for using parks to mitigate some of these problems (e.g. bike trails for alternative transportation and cleaner air, watershed protection in natural areas).

CHAIRS OF COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS

- While county supervisors ranked residents' value for parks creating jobs and generating income for local businesses at the lowest level, the supervisors themselves actually agreed with the statement that recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending, helping the economy.
- County supervisors indicated a low to medium satisfaction with the current availability of park facilities and recreation programs but assigned the issue a medium to high level of importance over the next five years.

COUNTY EXECUTIVES

- In framing budgetary requests for parks and recreation programs, an emphasis on quality of life and the positive effect that parks have on property values would most likely concur with county executives' opinions of parks and recreation programs. This is especially true considering that improving the local economy ranked at the top of their important community issues over the next five years.
- County executives indicated slightly less than a medium level of satisfaction with the availability of parks and recreation programs but they assigned it a medium to high level of importance as a local issue over the next five years, but still lower than all the other community issues. These data seem to show that while county executives would like to see more parks and recreation programs, they expect other issues will take precedence in the future.

Background

The Planning Division of California State Parks is charged with collecting relevant data on current trends and opinions related to parks and recreation. This survey of leaders was designed as a tool for understanding how people in elected or appointed positions perceive the park and recreation facilities within their jurisdictions. It also examines leaders' perspectives on local issues and priorities. This study presents opinions from legislators, mayors, chairs of county boards of supervisors and county executives who have the power to distribute resources for parks and recreation, including money, land and staffing.

This survey was conducted in conjunction with the California Park and Recreation Society and the League of California Cities. It is the first of its type to take into consideration factors of importance, satisfaction, perception of constituency, and opinion. With this information, park and recreation providers will be able to better tailor the programs and services that they provide by building on areas that California leaders consider of high value and also strengthening areas that are currently perceived to be of lesser value. It was also designed for future use in comparing results with an upcoming statewide survey of public opinions and attitudes.

To retrieve this information, a brief survey was formatted to focus on four major areas of inquiry:

- How do leaders perceive residents' value for parks and recreation?
- What are leaders' opinions of local parks and recreation facilities?
- Where does the availability of parks and recreation opportunities fall among the other important community issues facing leaders in the next five years?
- How satisfied are leaders with current parks and recreation conditions?

These four major focus areas contained similar questions to facilitate comparisons between the opinions of legislators, mayors, county supervisors, and county executives.

<u>Leader Group</u>	<u>Survey Date</u>	<u># Surveyed</u>	<u># Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
State Legislators	January 2002	120	58	(48.3%)
Mayors	January 2002	476	222	(46.6%)
County Supervisors	March 2002	58	27	(46.6%)
County Executives	March 2002	58	40	(68.9%)

1. A note of caution in the data analysis—these results give equal weight to the responses of large and small and urban and rural cities, counties and legislative districts. The leaders surveyed represent various levels of government and program responsibility; i.e., city government, legislature, county government. Results showing that county leaders place a lower value on team sports and youth activities than city

leaders must be evaluated in light of the respondents' fundamentally different areas of responsibility.

Comparative Opinions Sense of Residents' Value of Parks and Recreation

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for residents of your area. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

	City Mayors	State Legltrs	County Suprs	County Execs	Overall Average
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	2.88	2.88	2.86	2.83	2.86
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	2.80	2.85	2.71	2.64	2.75
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	2.84	2.88	2.54	2.56	2.71
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	2.74	2.71	2.46	2.73	2.66
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	2.26	2.48	2.77	2.55	2.51
Protecting cultural and historic places.	2.57	2.65	2.15	2.60	2.49
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	2.61	2.69	2.46	2.18	2.48
Places to celebrate cultural unity (i.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	2.52	2.56	2.38	2.20	2.42
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	2.45	2.50	2.31	2.33	2.39
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	2.24	2.31	1.71	1.95	2.05
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	1.77	2.27	2.07	1.62	1.93

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

Every group of leaders placed the highest value on parks and recreation programs for providing **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities**, with county supervisors scoring the highest rating. County supervisors rated parks higher than other leaders in **protecting valuable environmental resources**. All leaders across the board assigned the lowest value to parks and recreation for **creating jobs and generating income for local businesses**¹. Legislators and mayors placed higher value on **the opportunity for team sports and youth activities** than county supervisors and county executives. Among all leaders, state legislators placed higher value on parks and recreation's role in **protecting cultural and historic places**, while mayors gave this a lower value. Legislators rated the value of **park and recreation professionals' facilitation and leadership skills** relatively high, while county executives gave this the lowest rating.

¹ These results are corroborated by a recent survey of the general public conducted by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the California State Parks Foundation.

This survey showed that the appeal of parks and recreation is often more emotional than rational. For example, respondents placed higher value on the role parks play in providing healthful opportunities for families and children than on the economic benefits of parks and recreation. *Public Attitudes, Opinions, and Use of California Parklands*, California State Parks, Marketing Division, 2002

Comparative Opinions Opinion of Park and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

	City Mayors	State Legltrs	County Suprs	County Execs	Overall Average
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my area.	2.89	2.99	2.89	2.93	2.92
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	2.64	2.73	2.46	2.61	2.61
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my jurisdiction.	2.70	2.83	2.46	2.44	2.61
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my jurisdiction.	2.20	2.36	2.36	2.21	2.28
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my area, helping its economy.	2.22	2.46	2.21	2.38	2.32
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	1.91	1.53	2.04	1.96	1.86
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my area.	2.16	2.23	1.57	1.75	1.93
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	1.71	1.47	1.68	1.71	1.64

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a Strongly Agree response is worth three points and a Strongly Disagree response is worth one point.

Leaders strongly agreed that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life**. Legislators appear to more strongly agree with positive statements about parks and recreation, scoring each positive statement higher than other leaders in almost every case. All leaders indicated their lowest level of agreement with the statements that **there are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my jurisdiction** and **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities**. Among the group, county supervisors gave highest score, while mayors gave the lowest score for the statement that **recreation areas and facilities can create jobs in my jurisdiction, helping its economy**. Conversely, mayors gave a higher score and county supervisors gave the lowest score to the statement that **there are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my jurisdiction**.

NOTE: The sixth and eighth statements in the listing are negative, therefore the lower agreement scores should be viewed differently than the mostly higher agreement scores for the six other positive statements.

Comparative Opinions Importance Rating of Local Issues over the Next Five Years

Question: *Please rate the following issues with respect to their importance in your jurisdiction over the next 5 years. (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)*

	City Mayors	State Legltrs	County Suprs	County Execs	Overall Average
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	2.68	2.75	2.79	2.73	2.73
Improving the local economy.	2.69	2.94	2.64	2.73	2.75
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	2.42	2.58	2.71	2.53	2.56
The need for more and better schools.	2.68	2.77	2.57	2.55	2.64
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.62	2.75	2.71	2.46	2.64
Population growth and urban development.	2.52	2.65	2.50	2.33	2.50
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	2.19	2.58	2.36	2.23	2.34
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	1.91	2.10	2.62	2.43	2.26

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Importance rating is worth three points and a Low Importance rating is worth one point.

While **the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** is clearly not at the top of the leaders list of important issues to be addressed, it is on a par with most other issues of high concern to these leaders. **The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure** tops the list of important issues over the next five for most leaders. They also gave high scores to **improving the local economy**. Mayors and legislators and county supervisors gave slightly higher scores than the other two groups **to the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs**. County supervisors scored **the loss of agricultural lands and open space** somewhat higher than other leaders. This probably reflects their direct involvement with local development issues.

Comparative Opinions Satisfaction Rating of Local Issues

Question: *Please rate these issues with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your area. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)*

	City Mayors	State Legltrs	County Suprs	County Execs	Overall Average
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.49	2.67	2.07	2.33	2.39
Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.	2.14	2.51	2.38	2.23	2.31
A strong local economy.	2.19	2.51	2.14	1.98	2.20
The availability and condition of local schools.	2.20	2.53	1.86	1.90	2.12
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.	2.04	2.45	1.86	1.95	2.07
The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.	2.20	2.53	1.57	1.90	2.05
The condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure.	2.10	2.49	1.50	1.75	1.96
Available housing and controlled growth.	2.03	2.43	1.57	1.73	1.94

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Satisfaction rating is worth three points and a Low Satisfaction rating is worth one point.

Legislators had a much higher level of satisfaction than any group with **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs**. Leaders appeared to be most satisfied with the current conditions of **crime, vandalism and public safety** and **protected agricultural lands and open space areas**, (although the average came close to a medium level of satisfaction). All leaders except legislators had a much lower level of satisfaction with **the condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure** and **available housing and controlled growth**.

California Legislators

The survey of California state legislators' opinions about parks and recreation was initiated in January of 2002. There were 120 surveys distributed with 58 respondents. These results represent almost half of all California legislators.

Of those who responded, two thirds reported that their districts included portions of the following Southern California counties, which represent more than half of California's total population:

- Los Angeles
- Orange
- San Diego
- San Bernardino
- Ventura
- Riverside

The majority (84%) of these Southern California legislators felt that there were not enough recreation areas and facilities in their districts.

Of all respondents, 46.8% characterized their districts as predominantly "suburban;" with 40.4% "urban;" and 12.8% "rural/agricultural."

The tables on the following pages provide data on the bulk of the questions that were included on the survey. To review the survey document, see page 31 of the Appendix.

California Legislators Sense of Residents' Value of Parks and Recreation

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your district. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

The Potential Values	Average Scores
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	2.88
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	2.88
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	2.85
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	2.71
Protecting cultural and historic places.	2.69
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	2.65
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	2.56
Places to celebrate cultural unity (I.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	2.50
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	2.48
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	2.31
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	2.27

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

Of the potential values presented, Legislators thought their residents would place the highest value on both **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities** and **strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place**. **The opportunity for team sports and youth activities** placed a close second. Lowest values were placed on statements that parks and recreation **creates jobs and generates income for communities and local businesses** and that **parks staff provides facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues**.

California Legislators Opinion of Park and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

The Potential Opinions	Average Scores
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my district.	2.99
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	2.83
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my district.	2.73
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my district.	2.46
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my district, helping its economy.	2.36
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	2.23
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my district.	1.53
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	1.47

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a Strongly Agree response is worth three points and a Strongly Disagree response is worth one point.

Legislators most strongly agreed with the statements that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life** and **recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property**. Legislators tended to disagree that **there are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use** and that **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities**.

California Legislators Importance and Satisfaction Ratings of Local Issues

Questions:

Importance: Considering only local issues over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for your district?). (High importance, Medium Importance, Low importance)

Satisfaction: Considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your district. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)

Importance	Average Scores		Satisfaction
The need for more and better schools.	2.94	2.67	Crime, vandalism and public safety.
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	2.77	2.53	The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.
Improving the local economy.	2.75	2.53	The condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure.
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	2.75	2.51	The availability and condition of local schools.
Population growth and urban development.	2.65	2.51	Available housing and controlled growth.
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.58	2.49	Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	2.58	2.45	A strong local economy.
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	2.10	2.43	Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth three points and a Low Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth one point.

Though still rated high, California legislators seemed less concerned about the **availability of park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** as an important issue over the next five years than with **the need for more and better schools**. State legislators assigned a medium to high satisfaction and importance rating to virtually all local issues but assigned a relatively low importance rating to **the loss of agricultural lands and open space**.

California Mayors

The survey of California mayors' opinions about parks and recreation began in January of 2002. There were 476 surveys distributed with 222 respondents. These results represent 46.6% of California's mayors. The mayors who responded represent cities whose combined population includes approximately 20 million of the total 34 million Californians. A majority of the responses (61.5%) were from cities with populations of 50,000 or less, with the remaining third coming from larger cities. Readers are cautioned that each response carries equal weight in this analysis.

Mayors were asked to indicate whether or not they felt that there are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in their city. The responses from small cities, large cities and rural agricultural areas showed that mayors from each category differed widely in assessing their own need for more recreation areas. The most significant response came from mayors of regional suburbs where 58% saw a deficiency in recreation areas and facilities.

The tables on the following pages provide data on the bulk of the questions that were included on the survey. To review the survey document, see page 27 of the Appendix.

California Mayors Sense of Residents' Value of Parks and Recreation

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your city. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

The Potential Values	Average Scores
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	2.88
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	2.84
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	2.80
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	2.74
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	2.61
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	2.57
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	2.52
Places to celebrate cultural unity (I.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	2.45
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	2.26
Protecting cultural and historic places.	2.24
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	1.77

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

Of the potential values presented, Mayors perceived their constituency to place almost an equally high value on **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities** and **strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place**. The relatively lowest values were placed on statements that parks staff provides **facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues**, that parks **protect cultural and historic places** and that parks and recreation **creates jobs and generates income for communities and local businesses**.

California Mayors Opinion of Park and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

The Potential Opinions	Average Scores
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my city.	2.89
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my city.	2.70
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	2.64
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my city.	2.22
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy.	2.20
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	2.16
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my city.	1.91
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	1.71

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a Strongly Agree response is worth three points and a Strongly Disagree response is worth one point.

Mayors most strongly agree with the statements that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life** and **recreation areas and facilities help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency**. Mayors tended to disagree that **there are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use** and that **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities**.

California Mayors Importance and Satisfaction Ratings of Local Issues

Questions:

Importance: *Considering only local issues over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for your community?). (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)*

Satisfaction: *Considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your city. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)*

Importance	Average Scores		Satisfaction
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	2.69	2.49	Crime, vandalism and public safety.
Improving the local economy.	2.68	2.20	The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	2.68	2.20	The condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure.
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.62	2.19	A strong local economy.
The need for more and better schools.	2.52	2.14	Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	2.42	2.10	The availability and condition of local schools.
Population growth and urban development.	2.19	2.04	Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	1.91	2.03	Available housing and controlled growth.

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth three points and a Low Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth one point.

The survey results appear to indicate that mayors consider the **need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** to be a relatively important issue to be addressed in the next five years, in the middle of a host of similarly important issues. Mayors seemed to be relatively satisfied with **the current availability of park facilities and recreation programs**. They were the least satisfied with the current condition of **available housing and controlled growth** but placed **the loss of agricultural lands and open space** last on their list of five year priorities.

California County Supervisors (Chairs)

The survey of California county supervisors' opinions about parks and recreation began in March of 2002. A survey was sent to the Chair of each County Board of Supervisors. There were 58 surveys distributed and 27 respondents. These results represent 46.6% of California's County Boards of Supervisors.

Without compromising the confidentiality of the survey, it should be noted that almost 90% of the respondents came from Northern and Central California counties and more than two-thirds indicated a deficiency in the availability of recreation areas and facilities for convenient use in their counties.

The tables on the following pages provide data on the bulk of the questions that were included on the survey. To review the survey document, see page 34 of the Appendix.

California County Supervisors Sense of Residents' Value of Parks and Recreation

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your county. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

The Potential Values	Average Scores
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	2.86
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	2.77
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	2.71
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	2.54
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	2.46
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	2.46
Places to celebrate cultural unity (I.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	2.38
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	2.31
Protecting cultural and historic places.	2.15
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	2.07
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	1.71

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

Of the potential values presented, county supervisors perceived their constituency to place the highest value on **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities**. Second was **park facilities protecting valuable environmental resources**. Lowest values, although still at a medium value, were placed on statements that parks staff provides **facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues** and that parks and recreation **creates jobs and generates income for communities and local businesses**.

California County Supervisors Opinion of Parks and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

The Potential Values	Average Scores
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my county.	2.89
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my county.	2.46
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	2.46
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my county.	2.36
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my county, helping its economy.	2.21
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	2.04
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	1.68
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my county.	1.57

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a Strongly Agree response is worth three points and a Strongly Disagree response is worth one point.

County Supervisors most strongly agree with the statements that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life** and that **recreation areas and facilities help reduce crime and increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property**. Supervisors disagree that **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities** and **there are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use**.

California County Supervisors Importance and Satisfaction Ratings of Local Issues

Questions:

Importance: Considering only local issues over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for your county?). (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)

Satisfaction: Considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your county. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)

Importance	Average Scores		Satisfaction
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	2.79	2.38	Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.71	2.14	A strong local economy.
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	2.71	2.07	Crime, vandalism and public safety.
Improving the local economy.	2.64	1.86	The availability and condition of local schools.
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	2.62	1.86	Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.
The need for more and better schools.	2.57	1.57	The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.
Population growth and urban development.	2.50	1.57	Available housing and controlled growth.
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	2.36	1.50	The condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure.

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth three points and a Low Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth one point.

Among all of the leaders surveyed, chairs of county boards of supervisors responded with the greatest difference between the relatively high importance they placed on **the availability of park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** as an issue over the next five years and their relatively low level of satisfaction with current park and recreation conditions. They also placed the highest priority overall on **the loss of agricultural lands and open space** despite indicating a relatively high level of satisfaction with the current conditions of **protected agricultural lands and open space areas**.

California County Executives

The survey of California county executives' opinions about parks and recreation began in March of 2002. The survey was sent to 58 county executives. With 40 responses, the results represent 68.9% of the potential respondents.

Without compromising the confidentiality of the survey, it should be noted that the 40 respondents were evenly distributed from counties in Northern, Central and Southern California, including the state's rural/agricultural, urban, and suburban areas. More than 60% indicated a deficiency in the availability of recreation areas and facilities for convenient use.

The tables on the following pages provide data on the bulk of the questions that were included on the survey. To review the survey document, see page 37 of the Appendix.

California County Executives Sense of Residents' Value of Park and Recreation Programs

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your county. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

The Potential Values	Average Scores
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	2.83
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	2.73
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	2.64
Protecting cultural and historic places.	2.60
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	2.56
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	2.55
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	2.33
Places to celebrate cultural unity (I.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	2.20
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	2.18
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	1.95
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	1.62

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

Of the potential values presented, county executives perceived their constituency placed the highest value on **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities**. Second was **the opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development**. Lowest values were placed on statements that parks and recreation **creates jobs and generates income for communities and local businesses** and that parks staff provides **the facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues**.

California County Executives Opinion of Park and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

The Potential Value	Average Scores
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my county.	2.93
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	2.61
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my county.	2.44
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in the county, helping its economy.	2.38
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my county.	2.21
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	1.96
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my county.	1.75
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	1.71

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a Strongly Agree response is worth three points and a Strongly Disagree response is worth one point.

County executives most strongly agree with the statements that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life** and **recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property**. County executives tended to disagree that **there are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use** and that **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities**.

California County Executives Importance and Satisfaction Ratings of Local Issues

Questions:

Importance: Considering only local issues over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for your community?). (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)

Satisfaction: Considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your city. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)

Importance	Average Scores		Satisfaction
Improving the local economy.	2.73	2.33	Crime, vandalism and public safety.
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	2.73	2.23	Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.
The need for more and better schools.	2.55	1.98	A strong local economy.
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	2.53	1.95	Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.46	1.90	The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	2.43	1.90	The availability and condition of local schools.
Population growth and urban development.	2.33	1.75	The condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure.
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	2.23	1.73	Available housing and controlled growth.

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth three points and a Low Importance or Satisfaction rating is worth one point.

Among all leaders surveyed, county executives gave the lowest importance rating to **the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** compared to other issues they plan addressing over the next five years. The **categories of crime, vandalism and public safety**, and **the loss of agricultural lands and open space** rated higher, even though county executives were clearly more satisfied with the current condition of these issues.

Planning Division Publications

In recent years, the Planning Division has produced a number of publications of interest to Park and Recreation professionals.

- **Bear Facts: Planning Trends and Information from California State Parks (8 pages).** The Planning Division publishes this newsletter three times a year, with the series starting June 2001. Each issue contains information on ideas, trends and information about in parks and recreation matters relevant to California.
- **California Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation 2002 (Second Edition) (50 pages).** Surveys of the opinions and of the value and benefit which the selected leaders see, and what these leaders believe their constituents see, on various topics related to parks and recreation areas and programs offered at the local level. The four sets of leaders individually surveyed were (1) California legislators, (2) California mayors, (3) the Chairs of county boards of supervisors, and (4) the county executives of California's counties.
- **California School Superintendents and Chamber of Commerce's Opinion of Park and Recreation (February 2003).** Surveys of the opinions and of the value and benefit School Superintendents and Chambers of Commerce directors have on current topics related to the complex field of parks and recreation. This document is the second Concept's volume reporting on a statewide survey of community leaders and includes a summary of all six targeted audiences and recommends future research and study topics.
- **Concepts: A Guidebook on Funding Sources for the Local Agency Provider (to be released Spring 2003)** An overview of funding opportunities available to local park and recreation agencies that face constraints on their traditional sources of revenue--fees, general funds and cost savings. This document will emphasize financing strategies that can supplement ongoing revenue streams to deal with additional expenses and to allow for program expansion and capital improvements.
- **The California Outdoor Recreation Plan -2002: (85 pages) (April 2003)** This plan assesses the major outdoor recreation issues facing California during the coming years and offers recommendations as to how these issues may be dealt with by public agency providers.
- **The California Recreational Trails Plan - 2002 (Phase 1): (52 pages) (January 2003)** Phase 1 of The California Recreation Trails Plan identifies 12 trail-related goals and lists general action guidelines designed to reach these goals. These goals and their action guidelines will direct the future actions of the Department's Statewide Trails Office regarding trail programs both within the State Park System and in its wider, statewide and national roles.

- California State Park System - Annual Statistical Report for 2001/02 (to be available in April 2003): Provides basic information on the State Park System for the subject fiscal year. Data is provided on such subjects as the location, acreage, key visitor facilities, and visitor use as well as on the staffing levels, operations costs, and revenue generated by department park districts. In addition, information is provided on the availability of other data and data sets that portray such departmental functions, as public safety, resource management projects, and a range of park visitor and administrative facilities.
- The State Park System Plan 2002, Parts I and II (February 2003). The Plan addresses the activities and needs of the System today and over the course of the next ten-years. It is presented in two components. Part I, **A System for the Future**, addresses the System with an emphasis on informing decision-makers, concerned organizations and a variety of stakeholders. Part II, **Initiatives for Action**, is primarily intended to guide staff members who keep the System functioning through its major programs and park operations.
- Planning Milestones for the Park Units and Major Properties Associated with the California State Park System: (126 pages) (July 2002) This annual report is a comprehensive summary and explanation of the extensive naming, classification and unit-level resource and land use planning work that has been done for the units and properties of the State Park System. Provides the definitive list of the system's units and properties as of July 2002.
- Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California - 1997: (109 pages) The third statewide survey in this series, assessing public attitudes, opinions, and values with respect to outdoor recreation in California. It also looks at demand for and current participation in selected types of outdoor recreation activities.
- Public Opinions and Attitudes- 2003: (soon to be released) The fourth statewide survey in this series, taken every five years, assessing public attitudes, opinions, and values with respect to outdoor recreation in California. It also looks at demand for and current participation in selected types of outdoor recreation activities.

These publications may be available from one or more of the following sources:

- State depository libraries (17)
- Planning Division library (on-site use only)
- Department's website at <http://www.ca.parks.gov>.

Individual copies may be purchased, as the supply permits, from the Planning Division at a small charge.

The *Concepts* Series

The planning staff of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is examining a wide range of situations and conditions relevant to the provision of outdoor recreation lands, programs, and services to California's citizens and our collective visitors. By means of surveys, seminars and other forms of study and research, the Department is working to understand current issues, trends, and their implications for service providers and the public. The results of these various efforts are made available to park and recreation professionals and supporters as a series of published reports under the general title of ***Concepts: Practical Tools for Parks and Recreation***.

These reports provide current ideas and information, often in the form of technical assistance, to park and recreation practitioners working in government agencies at all levels, as well to those associated with non-profit groups, volunteer organizations, and to private individual concerned with parks, recreation and open space issues.

The first three reports in this series, and their dates of issuance, are:

- **California Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation 2002**
- **California School Superintendents and Chamber of Commerce's Opinions of Park and Recreation 2002**
- **Glossary of Common Park and Recreation Terms 2003**

Copies of any report in the Concepts series is available from:
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